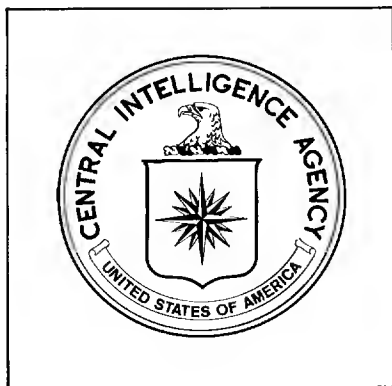


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MIDDLE EAST – AFRICA – SOUTH ASIA

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Nigeria

Ayida Appointed Secretary to FMG

General Gowon has appointed Allison Ayida as the new Secretary to the Federal Military Government and as the head of Nigeria's large civil service. Ayida will have direct access to General Gowon and will play an important advisory role in the shaping of government policy. Until recently, Ayida was the highest-ranking civil servant at the ministry of finance. He has a reputation as a brilliant and highly pragmatic economist.

Nigeria's military rulers probably look to Ayida to take more forceful charge of the civil service in order to ensure the success of a newly launched five-year development plan. Gowon and the other senior officers realize that one of the keys to retaining popular support over the next few years will be their ability more effectively to translate Nigeria's oil wealth into visible economic progress.

Senior civil servants such as Ayida strongly support the continuance of military rule, in which they have a vested interest. The military government relies heavily on their technical expertise. It has put few restraints on their efforts to centralize authority in federal hands and to exercise day-to-day control of the government. Unlike the more political cabinet heads, the permanent secretaries frequently are invited to participate in meetings of the Supreme Military Council and less formal decision-making sessions with Gowon and his closest military advisers. (CONFIDENTIAL)



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